




## Section 2/A Production Principles & Criteria 2.0

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### Orientation

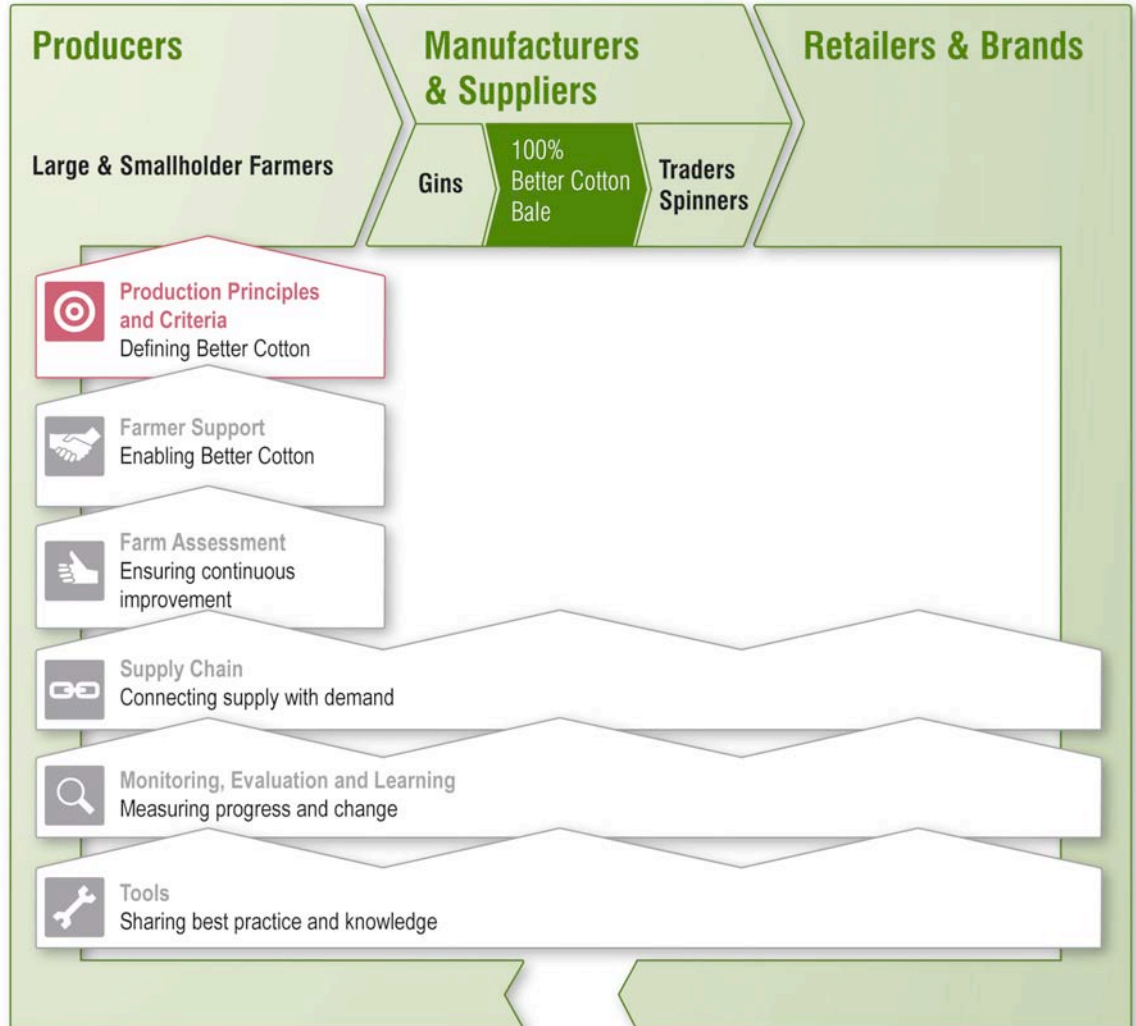
The section provides BCI's Production Principles and Criteria. The Principles, covering a range of environmental and social aspects of cotton production, describe the broad areas that need to be addressed by the farmer for the production of Better Cotton. The Minimum Production Criteria represent the initial core requirements for farmers to grow Better Cotton. These are highlighted with the pink graphic  placed above the criteria, throughout the document.

### Contents

Overview of the Better Cotton System	2
Context of Global Cotton Production	3
The Better Cotton System	3
Production Principles	4
Consultation to date and next steps	4
Production Principles and Criteria	5
-Crop Protection	5
-Water	6
-Soil	6
-Habitat	6
-Fibre Quality	6
-Decent Work	7



## Overview of the Better Cotton System





## INTRODUCING BCI'S PRODUCTION PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

### Context of Global Cotton Production

Cotton is one of the most important and widely grown crops in the world. It is estimated that nearly 35 million hectares are under cotton cultivation, representing about 2.5% of the world's arable land. About 80 countries produce cotton on a commercial scale and more than 90% of cotton farmers live in developing countries on farms of less than 2 hectares. Nearly everywhere it is grown cotton represents an important cash crop for farmers and an economically valuable part of the total national economy. Cotton is for millions of people, in some of the world's poorest countries, a vital and unique link to the global economy. The International Cotton Advisory Committee estimates that there are about 300 million people who work in the wider cotton industry each year.

There are various negative social and environmental impacts associated with cotton cultivation worldwide that undermine its sustainability. Attention is needed at the farm level where serious impacts on people and the environment can occur. Inefficient irrigation techniques, poor cultivation practices, and improper use of pesticides and fertilizers threaten the availability of clean water, soil fertility, human health and biodiversity. As well as the health and safety impacts related to pesticide use, socio-economic impacts have been reported to include arduous working conditions (particularly for women workers), child labour and forms of forced or bonded labour, as well as indebtedness due to high input prices, crop failure, delayed payment and/or unaffordable rates of interest.

Achieving improvements in the social and environmental conditions of cotton production is essential for human and environmental health, the livelihood of millions of people world-wide, and the future of the commodity. The negative effects of using agricultural soils and water resources for cotton production need to be significantly reduced, and production methods need to respect the principles of long-term sustainability. From a social point of view, farmers and workers need to be able to earn their living from growing cotton, without having to take unacceptable risks.

For the last two years, the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) has been working with organisations from

across the cotton supply chain and interested stakeholders to facilitate a solution for the mainstream cotton sector. The BCI's philosophy is to develop a market for a new mainstream commodity: 'Better Cotton' and thereby transform the cotton commodity to bring long-term benefits for the environment, farmers and other people dependent on cotton for their livelihood.

### The Better Cotton System

The Production Principles and Criteria (described in more detail below) cannot operate in isolation, and form part of the Better Cotton System. This Better Cotton System is made up of the following inter-dependent components, each as important as the other in making the system effectively deliver its objectives:

- **Production Principles and Criteria** to provide a global definition of Better Cotton
- **Farmer Support** to promote enabling mechanisms at a local and global level, working with experienced implementing partners, and stimulating public-private partnership funds to implement these mechanisms
- **Farm Assessment** to encourage farmers to continuously improve, through measuring results and seasonal learning cycles
- **Supply Chain** connecting supply with demand through an identifiable bale of 100% Better Cotton lint
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning** mechanisms to measure progress and change and to ensure the Better Cotton System has the intended impacts on its direct beneficiaries
- **Tools**, guidelines and learning forums to facilitate the exchange of best practices and knowledge to encourage the scaling up of collective action


The Production Principles describe the broad areas under the control of the farmer that need to be addressed by the farmer for the production of Better Cotton. The Criteria listed under the Production Principles provide a greater level of detail on the specific areas that need to be addressed within each Production Principle. Together, the Production Principles and their associated Criteria determine the level of commonality of the issues addressed by producing Better Cotton worldwide.



Underpinning the Production Principles and Criteria is the fundamental premise that growing Better Cotton respects national and other applicable law.

## PRODUCTION PRINCIPLES

1. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who minimise the harmful impact of crop protection practices
2. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who use water efficiently and care for the availability of water
3. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for the health of the soil
4. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who conserve natural habitats
5. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for and preserve the quality of the fibre
6. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who promote decent work

The Criteria highlighted with  are BCI's 'Minimum Production Criteria', and represent the initial core requirements to grow Better Cotton. These Minimum Production Criteria, that farmers need to meet as the starting point in the cycle of continuous improvement and accessing the market to sell Better Cotton, were selected through a consultative process with the Regional Working Groups, as well as with existing initiatives. They form part of the requirements for a farmer to be a BCI Farmer.


## Consultation to date and next steps

This version (2.0) of the Production Principles and Criteria for Better Cotton has been developed on the basis of input and consultations, since February 2007, with Regional Working Groups in Brazil, India, Pakistan and West & Central Africa; Advisory Committee members; Better Cotton Partners; Experts, Friends and public consultation. Please refer to the full consultation reports for Version 1.0 and Version 2.0 for more details on the comments received, and BCI's response to them ([http://www.bettercotton.org/index/95/progress\\_&\\_resources.html](http://www.bettercotton.org/index/95/progress_&_resources.html)). These Production Principles and Criteria will apply for an initial implementation period through 2012 and will be reviewed at the end of this period.

Further detail on the scope and intent of the Production Principles and Criteria can be found in the document 'Production Principles and Criteria 2.0 Explained', which can be found in the Appendix of the Better Cotton System information pack.



## Production Principles & Criteria 2.0

Criteria highlighted with  are BCI's 'Minimum Production Criteria'



### 1. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who minimise the harmful impact of crop protection practices



**1.1** An Integrated Pest Management Programme is adopted that includes the following elements:

- (i) growing of a healthy crop; and
- (ii) prevention of build-up of pest populations; and
- (iii) preservation and enhancement of populations of beneficial insects; and
- (iv) regular field observations of the crop's health and key pest and beneficial insects; and
- (v) management of resistance.



**1.2** Only pesticides that are:

- (i) registered nationally for the crop being treated; and
- (ii) correctly labelled in the national language are used.



**1.3** Pesticides listed in the Stockholm Convention are not used.



**1.4** Pesticides are prepared and applied by persons who are:

- (i) healthy; and
- (ii) skilled and trained in the application of pesticides; and
- (iii) 18 or older; and
- (iv) not pregnant or nursing.

**1.5** Use of pesticides in any of the following categories:

- (i) WHO Class I
- (ii) those listed by the Rotterdam Convention
- (iii) endosulfan,

is phased out, with the timeline based on the availability of better alternatives and ability for the risk to be properly managed<sup>1</sup>.

**1.6** Pesticides are always prepared and applied by persons who correctly use appropriate protective and safety equipment.

**1.7** Pesticide application equipment and containers are stored, handled and cleaned so as to avoid environmental harm and human exposure.

**1.8** Pesticides are applied in appropriate weather conditions, according to label directions, and or manufacturers' directions, with appropriate and well-maintained equipment.

**1.9** Used pesticide containers are collected by a recycling programme, or disposed of safely.

<sup>1</sup> Details about how the phasing out timelines are to be developed can be found in the document 'Production Principles and Criteria 2.0 Explained'





## 2. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who use water efficiently and care for the availability of water



**2.1** Water management practices are adopted that optimise water use.

**2.2** Management practices are adopted to ensure that water extraction does not cause adverse effects on groundwater or water bodies.



## 4. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who conserve natural habitats

**4.1** Practices are adopted that enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the farm.



**4.2** The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use.



## 3. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for the health of the soil

**3.1** Soil management practices are adopted that maintain and enhance the structure and fertility of the soil.

**3.2** Nutrients are applied on the basis of crop and soil needs. Timing, placement and quantity applied are all optimised.

**3.3** Management practices are adopted that minimise erosion, so that soil movement is minimised and water courses, drinking water sources and other bodies of water are protected from farm run-off.



## 5. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who care for and preserve the quality of the fibre

**5.1** Management practices are adopted that maximise the fibre quality.



**5.2** Seed cotton is harvested, managed, and stored to minimise trash, contamination and damage.



Photo: WWF  
Jamie Pittock

## 6. Better Cotton is produced by farmers who promote Decent Work

Criteria applicable to all: smallholders (self-employed/family smallholdings); smallholder employers; large farm employers

### Freedom of Association



**6.1** Smallholders (including tenants, sharecroppers and other categories) have the right, on a voluntary basis, to establish and develop organisations representing their interests.

*(For provisions on worker organisation in the context of non-family employment, see additional criteria below.)*

### Health and Safety

**6.2** Access to potable and washing water is provided.

*(See also Crop Protection Criteria)*

## Child Labour



**6.3** There is no child labour, in accordance with ILO Convention 138.

Exceptionally, in the case of family smallholdings, children may help on their family's farm provided that the work is not liable to damage their health, safety, well-being, education or development, and that they are supervised by adults and given appropriate training.



**6.4** For hazardous work, the minimum age is 18 years.

## Forced Labour



**6.5** Employment is freely chosen: no forced or compulsory labour, including bonded or trafficked labour.

## Non-discrimination



**6.6** There is no discrimination (distinction, exclusion, or preference) practised that denies or impairs equality of opportunity, conditions, or treatment based on individual characteristics and group membership or association.



## Additional Criteria applicable to smallholder employers and large farm employers (“employers”):

Smallholder employers	Large farm employers
<b>FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING</b>	
6.7	All workers and employers have the right to set up and join organisations of their own choosing, and to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives and to formulate their programmes.
6.8	Workers and employers have the right to bargain collectively.
	6.9 Workers have the right to belong to a trade union and carry out lawful union activities without any fear of anti-union discrimination.
	6.10 Employers should provide access and reasonable facilities for workers' representatives.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	
	6.11 Workers receive regular health and safety training appropriate to the work that they perform.
	6.12 Employers meet their workers' basic requirements, as specified above, and including a clean place to eat, and access to adequate medical care at no charge.
	6.13 Employers identify work hazards, inform workers of safe work practices, and adopt preventive measures to minimise hazards in the workplace. Employers maintain records of any accidents and occupational diseases.
	6.14 Employers ensure that measures are in place to deal with accidents and emergencies, including first aid and access to appropriate transportation to medical facilities.
<b>EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS</b>	
	6.15 Waged workers are paid wages at least equivalent to the applicable legal national minimum wage or regional norm, whichever is higher.
	6.16 Where workers are paid at a piece-rate, this rate permits the worker to earn the applicable national minimum wage or regional norm (whichever is higher) during normal working hours and under normal operating conditions.
	6.17 Workers are paid regularly in cash, or in a form that is convenient to them.
	6.18 The principle of equal pay for work of equal value is observed.
	6.19 The worker's consent is obtained in advance as regards all working conditions.
	6.20 Workers are employed under legally binding (preferably written) contracts of employment.
	6.21 Adequate records are kept in accordance with national law, but in any event sufficient to enable monitoring.
	6.22 Temporary, seasonal and (sub-) contracted workers receive equivalent benefits and employment conditions to permanent workers in relation to their period of employment.
	6.23 Working hours comply with national laws or relevant collective agreements, whichever is more favourable to the worker.
	6.24 Overtime work is voluntary and remunerated in accordance with the law or applicable collective agreements.
<b>BASIC TREATMENT AND DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES</b>	
6.25	Employers do not engage in or tolerate the use of corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, sexual or other harassment or physical or verbal abuse of any kind.
6.26	There is a transparent and clear policy and system for disciplinary measures and this is communicated to workers. The system includes fair warning principles and any disciplinary actions are proportionate to the conduct in question.